

## Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, VE, US

SUBJ: GOV EXTENDS UNPRECEDENTED COURTESIES TO U.S. DURING  
JULY 4 BICENTENNIAL FESTIVITIES

REF: CARACAS 8103; CARACAS A-86; CARACAS 6740

1. IN ADDITION TO CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY VENEZUELAN CONGRESS (CARACAS 8103), AND EXECUTIVE DECREE PROCLAIMING JULY 4 DAY OF NATIONAL JUBILATION (CARACAS 6740), WHICH WAS PUBLISHED IN U.S. PRESS AS GOV AD GOV IN GENERAL AND AND PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ IN PARTICULAR WENT OUT OF THEIR WAY TO EXPRESS CONGRATULATIONS TO U.S. DURING JULY 4 FESTIVITIES HERE. PRESIDENT PEREZ TOGETHER WITH THE FULL CABINET IN ATTENDANCE LAID A WREATH AT THE STATUE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON AT 9:30 A.M., JULY 4. CHARGE AND COUNTRY TEAM PARTICIPATED IN THE CEREMONY. FOLLOWING THIS CEREMONY, THE PRESIDENT THEN RECEIVED OFFICIALS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION, THE CHARGE AND PAO IN HIS OFFICE FOR SOME TWENTY MINUTES DURING WHICH HE CONGRATULATED THEM WARMLY ON THE U.S. BICENTENNIAL. (CHARGE ACCOMPANIED BY MEMBERS OF THE EMBASSY COUNTRY TEAM THEN PLACED A WREATH AT THE NATIONAL PANTHEON, THE TOMB OF BOLIVAR.) AT THE CHARGE'S EVENING INDEPENDENCE DAY PARTY, THE PRESIDENT, ACCOMPANIED BY EIGHT CABINET-LEVEL OFFICIALS, ARRIVED AT THE START OF THE PARTY AND STAYED FOR OVER ONE HOUR. VIRTUAL TOTALITY OF TOP GOV POLITICAL LEADERSHIP ALSO ATTENDED, INCLUDING PRESIDENT OF SENATE, PRESIDENT OF SUPREME COURT, AND NUMEROUS  
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LEADERS FROM AD AND COPEI INCLUDING COPEI PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL

LUIS HERRERA CAMPINS. FORMER PRESIDENT CALDERA WAS ALSO PRESENT, AND FORMER PRESIDENT BETANCOURT WROTE A LENGTHY AND EFFUSIVE LETTER REGRETTING HIS INABILITY TO ATTEND.

2. BOTH THE WASHINGTON WREATH-LAYING CEREMONY AND THE PRESIDENT'S ATTENDANCE AT OUR BICENTENNIAL PARTY WERE UNPRECEDENTED ACTIONS ON THE PART OF A VENEZUELAN CHIEF OF STATE. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, NO VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT HAS COMMEMORATED OUR INDEPENDENCE DAY AT THE GEORGE WASHINGTON STATUE, AND IT HAS BEEN ALMOST TWENTY YEARS SINCE A VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT ATTENDED A JULY 4 PARTY. IN FACT, PRESIDENT PEREZ RARELY, IF EVER, ATTENDS ANY NATIONAL DAY FUNCTIONS.

3. CARACAS NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THESE EVENTS WAS EXTRAORDINARILY EXTENSIVE AND ONE PHOTO, FOR INSTANCE, SHOWED THE PRESIDENT TALKING TO CHARGE WITH BUST OF LINCOLN WHICH SECRETARY KISSINGER PRESENTED TO PEREZ IN FEBRUARY IN THE BACKGROUND.

4. COMMENT. WE FRANKLY DID NOT EXPECT THE DEGREE OF EFFUSIVE CONGRATULATIONS AND ATTENTION WE RECEIVED FROM THE GOV. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT PRESIDENT PEREZ WISHED TO MAKE CLEAR HIS DESIRE FOR CONTINUED GOOD RELATIONS, DESPITE POLICY DIFFERENCES, AND TOOK SPECIAL OCCASION OF OUR BICENTENNIAL TO IMPRESS US WITH HIS GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS IN THIS REGARD. SEPTEL FOLLOWS ON PEREZ'S JULY 5 ADDRESS WHICH ALSO CONTAINED REFERENCE TO BICENTENNIAL. ASENC IO

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